

Haiti

Q. Is President Aristide ready to accept 300 American troops to train his military force and carry out all the provisions of the agreement?

President Aristide. We are doing our best to do that and also to have what we call the four points of—[inaudible]—plan: professionalization of the army, a new police force, reform of the judicial system, and the economic package for having something for every single citizen of the country.

Economic Program

Q. Mr. President, on the budget, Senator Boren wants more cuts; Congressman Rangel wants more taxes for more investment programs. How do you bridge this kind of gap?

The President. I don't know. That's what they're working on now. Senator Boren voted with some enthusiasm for the bill when it came out of the Senate. We'll be glad to work with him. But we'll just have to see what happens.

Q. And are you leaning toward a higher gasoline tax than the 4.3 percent? There are indications from your people on the Hill that you are.

The President. Let's see what happens there in the budget process. I went up there and talked to the conferees, and I told them what I thought the principles and the guideposts ought to be, and they're working on it.

Q. How about——

The President. They may discuss a lot of different things. Let's just see what happens.

Q. Are you thinking of 5 cents, 5 cents a gallon?

Bosnia

Q. Have you given up on Bosnia?

The President. No. That's not true. Those stories are not accurate.

Q. That's the way Secretary Christopher's remarks were interpreted.

The President. I disagree that that's what they said. I realize that that's how one or two sentences were interpreted, but that's not so. We have aggressively committed ourselves to the process in Geneva. And if the Bosnian Government voluntarily signs an agreement, we have made it clear that we were prepared to participate in the enforcement of it. And we are continuing to work with the Europeans on other options. So you know what the United States believes, that an opportunity was lost shortly after Athens because our position did not prevail with the Europeans. But that is not true that we have given up on it. We are continuing to work.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:40 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's Meeting With President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti

July 22, 1993

President Clinton held a cordial and constructive meeting this morning with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti. The meeting lasted about 30 minutes. This was their first meeting since the signing of the so-called Governors Island agreement on July 3, although they spoke by telephone on July 4.

The President commended President Aristide on his signing of the agreement, which establishes a sound timetable for the restoration of democracy and for Aristide's return to Haiti on October 30, just 100 days from now. The President described the agreement as an historic step

forward for democracy, economic prosperity, and freedom for Haiti. He reaffirmed that the United States will continue to play a leadership role with the international community in helping foster a better life for the Haitian people.

The President and President Aristide discussed the steps that need to be taken to fulfill the terms of the agreement, including the naming of a new Prime Minister by President Aristide in consultation with members of the Haitian Parliament.